Mindfulness for Educators: Fostering Awareness and Resilience in the Classroom

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Abstract

Teaching in the public schools is demanding work, and addressing teacher stress in the classroom remains a significant challenge in education. Increasing numbers of children come to school unprepared and often at risk of mental health and behavioral concerns, yet teachers are expected to provide emotionally responsive support to *all* students, manage larger classroom sizes, and meet the growing academic demands imposed by standardized testing. Despite these high expectations, teachers rarely receive training to address and skillfully handle the social-emotional challenges of their profession. A current examination of teacher educational and in-service professional development activities indicates that little professional development specifically targets these competencies.

Over the last decade, mindfulness—the intentional cultivation of focused attention and awareness—has grown from its initial western applications in medicine to other disciplines, including education. Studies have shown that even a few weeks of practicing mindfulness can bring a variety of physical, emotional, and social benefits to teachers and students alike. This project aims to introduce mindfulness training to teachers to bolster positive qualities of mind and enhance responsive, compassionate teaching.

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The capability of human life is beyond our imagination. What counts is the human capacity to investigate and transform our own mind and the world around us in a powerful and positive direction.

– Gelek Rimpoche

The education of attention would be an education par excellence.
-William James

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Statement of Problem

School environments have become more stressful in recent years. Growing numbers of children come to school exhibiting behavioral problems – often stemming from poor mental health – while class sizes also continue to grow (Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2001). While their auxiliary support diminishes, teachers are expected to impart academic knowledge to students, (who are frequently neither prepared nor inclined to receive it), while remaining steadfast in the face of the unremitting emotional challenges endemic to the modern classroom.

Many teachers do not find themselves up to the challenge of this virtually impossible mandate. Conducting a study through the union Labor Commissions, Franco, Mañas, Cangas, Moreno, and Gallego (2010), found that teachers are among the professional collectives most affected by psychological problems and burnout-related stress. The situation has reached such an extreme that eight out of every ten teachers report that psychological problems are the group's main ailment (Sevilla & Villanueva, 2000). According to Gallup's State of America's Schools Report, nearly 70% of K-12 educators surveyed do not feel engaged in their work (as cited in Lopez & Sidhu, 2013).

It would seem, then, that exceptionally high levels of social and emotional competence are required to successfully withstand the barrage of stresses inherent in teaching. Considering all that our society expects of them, we do teachers a disservice by denying them professional development intended to prepare them specifically for the growing social and emotional challenges that they encounter in their jobs. In the absence of substantial preparation and support, many teachers respond to these challenges in unskillful ways: by displaying common

psychological, emotional, and behavioral manifestations of stress; by creating climates of stress in their classrooms that in turn negatively affect their students; or by abandoning the profession altogether (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Stress within the teaching profession has a negative impact on the health and well-being of individual teachers and on retention and recruitment for the profession as a whole. Many teachers leave the classroom citing job dissatisfaction and a desire to find a less exhausting profession. One educator laments:

> This is a profession of being thrown to the wolves with little support, constant change, and heavy criticism. Worse, I love every aspect of the job but cannot complete the load required, and thus am riddled with mounting anxiety such that my weekends, like my weekdays, are sleepless, full of work, and exhausting. It is easy to feel incompetent. Being an English teacher was my dream. I lived it. I think I need to dream a different dream now. I'm trying not to be so sad about it. But I'm exhausted. (as cited in Kopkowski, 2008)

These departures from the teaching profession cost roughly $7 billion a year, as districts and states recruit, hire, and attempt to retain new teachers (The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). In this educational climate, where nearly half of teachers leave within five years, we know that educational "business as usual" is not sufficient; the familiar approaches are just not adequate when things get tough in the classroom (Schoeberlein, 2009). In their interpretation of the current research, Jennings et al., (2009) and Roeser, Skinner, Beers, & Jennings, (2012) perceive a need for teacher education that targets core social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Some teachers seem to be naturally more resilient in

responding to the stresses of their job. Research suggests that coping abilities of such "stress hardy" teachers can be taught (Lantieri, Kyse, Harnett, & Charlotte, 2011).

Advances in modern neuroscience suggest that the mind is trainable: not only do we have the capacity to change the way our minds function, but we can actually change the "hard wiring," or neural networks, of our brains (Hanson, 2009). Training in healthy habits of mind creates beneficial new neural pathways. All too often we are functioning on autopilot – unaware of habits that cause us stress and interfere with our ability to learn and respond effectively to the stimuli in our daily lives. If we attend to the body and mind as an integrated whole, we can change our habits so as to respond to everyday situations more effectively and facilitate better overall functioning. With sustained practice, we can improve our mental functioning and enhance our intra- and inter- personal awareness. These improvements simultaneously benefit our performance at work and our social and emotional effectiveness, which ultimately results in a more satisfying personal and professional life (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; 2003).

1.2 Personal Relevance

Public educators experience stress in their jobs commensurate with the staggering array of academic and social-emotional demands confronting them. I know this first-hand from juggling the myriad of responsibilities entailed in managing my own classroom, and from observing the various manifestations of stress in my colleagues – its effects in their personal lives and upon the learning of their students. Finding a harmonious balance between work and some semblance of a personal life was a continual personal quest.

As I moved too quickly in the world and worked at a pace dictated by curriculum demands, I felt a deep sense of unease and discontent in my work life. I recognized that it was time for me to pause from classroom teaching – to peel back the layers of physical tension that

had built up in my body and to sit quietly with the layers of mental accumulation that resulted from my years in the classroom. Although I had the "tools" as a long-time yoga and mindfulness practitioner and an inner awareness of these aspects of my being, I also found it difficult to be completely unaffected by the frantic pace swirling around me. I did not want my work life to be an unmindful and a hurried series of "uninspired performances." As Easwaran (2005) describes,

> There is no joy in work which is hurried, which is done when we are at the mercy of pressures from outside, because such work is compulsive. All too often hurry clouds judgment. More and more, to save time, a person tends to think in terms of pat solutions and to take shortcuts and give uninspired performances. (p. 47)

My personal studies and investigations as a registered yoga teacher (RYT) led me to an emergent body of research and field practice in contemplative education, widely referred to by its adherents as *mindfulness in education*. Attending my first retreat for educators under the aegis of mindfulness was like coming home to myself. As Palmer (1998) expresses, "Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10). I felt like my inner teacher was finally being honored and cared for in ways my previous teacher education did not provide. This growing body of mindful education research affirms what my own experiences had suggested: significant improvements in academic performance can be achieved only as a concomitant of improved overall physical and social-emotional health of teachers and students alike.

1.3 Educational Significance

Teacher burnout is clearly a pressing issue in the United States public education system because the need for highly qualified teachers continues to increase. Every year, U.S. schools hire more than 200,000 new teachers, and by the end of the school year, at least 22,000 have

resigned (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Even those teachers who make it beyond the first year are not likely to remain: about one third of all newly recruited teachers are either leaving or reporting burnout in their first three to five years of professional experience (NCTAF, 2007). These losses come with significant cost: when teachers drop out, everyone pays.

Students from the lowest income families suffer the most, as inexperienced teachers – without adequate professional training to respond to the real challenges they face – are placed in classrooms with students whose need is greatest – both behaviorally and academically. The multidimensional effect of an impoverished upbringing is one of the greatest predictors for school success and achievement (Jensen, 2009). It is critical to recognize the negative cycle here – one that both teachers and their deprived students are set-up for under these circumstances. Not only are these disadvantaged students far more likely to drop out of school, so too are their teachers likely to fatigue. This fatigue is felt in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD), as one veteran teacher wrote:

> My job is not healthy for me physically or emotionally…I find myself struggling more each year with the expectations placed on teachers. I have a very difficult class this year. I work with children in poverty with significant behavior problems and feel I need other coping mechanisms than what I've been given in the past. I want to learn how to address my own stress so that I know better how to address the students' needs and be helpful to them. (Anonymous, 2013)

The implementation of mindful awareness practices can be a helpful intervention in school environments for a variety of stress-related problems. At the core, teachers want to help their students become better integrated, healthy human beings. Numerous studies have shown that social-emotional learning (SEL), such as mindfulness, increases teacher effectiveness and

correspondingly students' academic achievement and positive attitudes toward self, school, and others. It also reduces problem behavior and emotional distress; everyone benefits. Rechtschaffen (2013), founder of the Mindful Education Institute and author of *The Way of Mindful Education, Cultivating Well-Being in Teachers and Students*, says it this way:

> The hope is that when we learn to embody our own mindful attention, compassion, and emotional regulation, the children in our care will receive the relational nourishment they need to become healthy and happy adults. We've all had the experience of a child falling down and looking up to us, basically asking us what the appropriate response should be. We look with a scared face and the child starts wailing, or, we look with a calm and focused attention and the child realizes he is fine and goes back to playing…Mindfulness can be a home base of stability and an inner lifeline…" (p. 30)

The manner in which educators process and respond to emotions influences children's education in ways that affect their social, emotional, and cognitive development. A recent study on social and emotional learning (SEL)-centered programs illustrates that a systematic process for promoting teachers' and students' social and emotional well-being is the common factor among schools that report an increase in academic success, improved quality of relationships between teachers and students, and a decrease in problem behavior (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

There is growing recognition at the local, state, and federal levels in the U.S. and around the world that schools must meet the social and emotional developmental needs of students in order for effective teaching and learning to take place (http://casel.org/research/sel-in-your-state/). Efforts to promote social-emotional skills, like mindfulness, in schools align with the views of leading economists who have been calling for a greater focus on what have been

traditionally referred to as "soft" skills. Nobel Laureate Heckman, has written that the greatest returns on education investments are "from nurturing children's non-cognitive skills, giving them social, emotional and behavioral benefits that lead to success later in life…" (as cited in Heckman & Masterov, 2004). Heckman et al. (2004), contend that training in emotional skills is a cost-effective approach to increasing the quality and productivity of the workforce through fostering workers' motivation, perseverance, and self-control. In order for students to thrive in this way, educators must have adequate and appropriate professional training to do their jobs well.

1.4 Project Scope

As Roeser et al. (2012) suggest, teachers are susceptible to problems that undermine their well-being and instructional practices when they do not develop healthy mental habits to effectively manage the demands of their profession. These positive "habits of mind," or what Davidson & the Mind and Life Education Research Network (2012) refer to as mental skills and social-emotional dispositions, are an incredibly important aspect of being an effective, resilient teacher in the 21st century. Such beneficial habits of mind include propensities to gather information through all of the senses, to be aware of and reflect on experience in a non-judgmental way, to be adaptable when problem-solving, to regulate emotion and be resilient in the face of difficulties, and to attend to others with empathy and compassion (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2006).

There is a growing number of professional development programs for teachers that target the cultivation of such positive qualities of mind through mindfulness practice—a way of paying attention to one's moment-by-moment experiences in an open and receptive manner (Shapiro & Carlson, 2009). Through these mindfulness-based programs, teachers learn skills to balance

their work and personal lives, to reduce stress, to cultivate inner strength and emotional resilience, and to build compassionate relationships with their students and colleagues. All of these skills have the potential to improve learning outcomes and the lives of teachers, students, and families (Jennings, 2011).

The developing body of mindfulness research and field practice draws from multiple disciplines: neuroscience, cognitive science, developmental psychology, education and contemplative traditions. Roeser et al. (2012) hypothesize that mindfulness training programs promote teachers' healthy habits of mind, and thereby their abilities to create and sustain both nurturing relationships with students and classroom climates that promote student engagement and learning. This mind training may well be the missing dimension in today's teacher education—to cultivate pro-social dispositions and thus reduce stress and burnout, lower attrition rates and ultimately improve educational outcomes.

To my knowledge, there are no mindfulness-based professional development programs for educators in the FNSBSD. Jennings (2009) conveys the current dilemma in education:

> We expect a great deal of teachers these days. Beyond merely conveying the course material, teachers are supposed to provide a nurturing learning environment, be responsive to students, parents, and colleagues, juggle the demands of standardized testing, coach students through conflicts with peers, be exemplars of emotion regulation, handle disruptive behavior and generally be great role models…the problem is we rarely give teachers training or resources for any of them. (p. 1)

The review of the current mindfulness training research from Meiklejohn et al. (2012) concurs, "There is an evident need for innovative, cost-effective ways for school systems to train and better support the resilience of their teachers" (p. 3).

We ought to approach these complex, human problems by asking the right questions. How can teachers alleviate and better manage their stress? How can we better prepare and open the minds and hearts of teachers (and students) to presence, receptivity, relationship, resilience and reflection?

My project uses mindfulness as a form of professional development to manage the demands of teaching and enhance classroom outcomes. While many school-based interventions are designed for students, relatively little effort is made to address stress and burnout among teachers and boost their well-being (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus, & Davidson, 2013). The aim of my project is to remedy this situation in the FNSBSD by introducing a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 1990) program designed specifically to target the concerns relevant to teachers and their roles in the classroom. The course I developed is designed to be delivered in a 6-week format and provide training modules on the essential mindfulness techniques (formal practice) and their application (informal practice) to real life. Teachers (a) practice breath- and body- awareness exercises to alleviate stress, (b) learn practical skills to navigate the complex emotional landscape of the classroom, and (c) develop knowledge of basic brain biology, including how emotions function and the important role they play in teaching and learning outcomes. Upon completion of this course, educators gain sufficient experience to continue a personal mindfulness practice and reap its benefits not only in their personal lives, but also in their professional activities: increased awareness, inner strength, and resilience as a backbone to provide better social, emotional, and instructional support to their students.

Chapter 2 Literature Review: Foundations of Mindfulness

2.1 What is Mindfulness?

If you ask a group of educators what the word *mindfulness* means, you would most likely get several definitions. A contemplative practice of calming and concentrating the mind may be found in nearly every culture since antiquity, and consequently, the term *mindfulness* has taken on many definitions over time. Though deeply rooted in these ancient origins, *mindfulness* can also be seen through educational, clinical, medical, and neurological lenses. Over the past two decades interest in mindfulness and its potential benefits has grown significantly, as more people from a variety of disciplines have sought ways to relate more skillfully to both their inner and outer experiences. This increased popularity of mindfulness has fostered some contextual ambiguity in the meaning of the term itself. As Shapiro and Carlson (2009) explain: "What can be confusing is that mindfulness is both a process (mindful practice) and an outcome (mindful awareness)" (p. 4). Also, the construct of mindful awareness is secular in nature, and is potentially accessible and applicable to all (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn is Professor of Medicine Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and co-founder of the popular Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program. Deemed the "father of mindfulness for his pioneering work in secular mindfulness, Kabat-Zinn produced the definition most widely used in the field: "Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p.4). In other words, *mindfulness* is to be intentionally aware of experience as it is unfolding, and to avoid getting lost in judgments. It is a form of mental training intended to enhance awareness and the ability to disengage from maladaptive patterns of mind that make one vulnerable to stress responses. Training in mindfulness attempts to increase awareness of

thoughts, emotions, and maladaptive ways of responding to stress, thereby helping participants learn to cope with stress in healthier, more effective ways (Bishop et al., 2004).

Mindfulness practitioners cultivate a conscious intention to "be present" for life as it unfolds from moment to moment. As human beings we have the unique capacity to pay attention and be aware of our inner experiences as well as our external environment, including other people. How does this relate to education? As Schoeberlein (2009) asserts, "When teachers are fully present, they teach better. When students are fully present, the quality of their learning is better. It's a 'win-win' equation that can transform teaching, learning, and the educational landscape (p. xi)."

2.2 The Neurobiology of Mindfulness

Neuroscience research has become one of the strongest backings for mindfulness practices, offering evidence to support a holistic message about cognitive, social, and emotional development. Scientific data now shows that the prefrontal cortex, considered the center of higher-level reasoning in the brain, also plays a significant role in emotional processing and regulation. This paradigm-shifting evidence has caused us to reconsider the relationship between reason and emotion (Davidson, 2012). Not only does academic learning depend on social and emotional skills, but it is also virtually impossible to separate the two. A report from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004) says it this way (as cited in Broderick, 2013):

> "...the interrelated development of emotion and cognition relies on the emergence, maturation, and interconnection of complex neural circuits in multiple areas of the brain...The circuits that are involved in the regulation of emotion are highly interactive with those that are associated with "executive functions" (such as planning, judgment,

> and decision making), which are intimately involved in the development of problem-solving skills during the preschool years...emotions support executive functions when they are well regulated, but interfere with attention and decision making when they are poorly controlled. (p. 7)

In practicing mindfulness, we can learn to effectively integrate different parts of the brain. There is a basic neuroscience concept: "Nerve cells that fire together, wire together." Due to recent findings of neural plasticity – this ability for our neural connections to change and adapt throughout the life span – we now understand that our brain can generate stronger and healthier neural circuitry based on our mental habits. Mindfulness trains our brains, like we train any other muscle, to respond in ways we choose rather than in default, knee-jerk reactive mode (Rechtschaffen, 2013; Jensen, 2009).

Eighteenth century author Maria Edgeworth claimed, "If we take care of the moments, the years will take care of themselves." For literally thousands of years mindfulness techniques have been used and developed in numerous philosophical and belief systems to promote health, happiness, and well-being. The past two decades have yielded some exciting neurobiological discoveries that illuminate the effects on the brain produced by many of these ancient means of pursuing health, happiness, and well-being (Diamond, 2009; Siegel, 2010; Davidson, 2012).

Research provides evidence that mindfulness training changes the structure of the brain in positive ways to enhance our mental functions and our interpersonal relationships. The stimulation and growth of neural circuitry through mindfulness practice enables us to resonate with others and to regulate ourselves (Siegel, 2010). At its very core, mindfulness is relational and thus beautifully interwoven with education.

To paraphrase Adele Diamond (2009), neuroscientist and founder of developmental cognitive neuroscience: Happy brains work better. When we are happy and engaged in satisfying activities, the brain is abundant with dopamine, a neurotransmitter that fuels higher-order thinking in our prefrontal cortex (PFC)—the highly evolved learning, reasoning, and thinking center of the brain. More vital to *how* we learn (i.e., the *process* of learning) than *what* we learn, the PFC controls the cognitive disciplines and flexibility we need to access, apply, and creatively build on what we learn across our life spans (Diamond, 2009). Such skills are a manifestation of the brain's capacity for what neuroscientists call "executive function" (Siegel, 2010). The bottom line is that stress shuts down the PFC (Siegel, 2010; Lantieri and Goldman, 2008). Scientists now believe that improving attention and memory, which mindfulness practice cultivates, puts the brain in the best state for learning. Interestingly, the type of mental discipline the PFC enables is a more definitive indicator of future thriving, academic and otherwise, than IQ (Diamond, 2009).

2.3 Mindfulness for Teachers Rationale

As a discipline, mindfulness can be integrated into the classroom using one of three basic approaches: indirect (the teacher develops a mindfulness practice and embodies mindfulness attitudes and behaviors throughout the school day); direct (programs teach students mindfulness lessons and skills); or a combination of both direct and indirect methods (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). For the purpose and scope of my project, I examine the first of these three approaches: The teacher learns mindfulness techniques, develops a practice, and thereby embodies mindful ways of being in the classroom and in professional relationships at school.

Dr. Richard Davidson is a renowned neuroscientist and leading expert on the impact of contemplative practices on the brain. In the film Healthy Habits of Mind (2013) he urges,

"People who are teaching these methods need to be grounded in them themselves. They need to have a mindfulness practice because that is the fundamental bedrock of their understanding." I assert that contemplative pedagogy flourishes when it is this interplay of the mindful teacher's presence with effective instructional methods. Much has been written about "best practices" in education; however, the personal presence of the teacher is an important pillar in the classroom demonstrating that curricular implementation and subject mastery alone are not enough (Brown, Simmer-Brown, & Grace, 2011).

Additionally, the South Burlington, Vermont, School District (SBSD, 2013), which is successfully committed to district-wide mindfulness training programs to promote wellness and resilience, identifies the importance for educators to learn and practice mindfulness strategies for themselves first. This is critical, as we learn by doing and watching what others do. Educators are thus important role models for students and have a huge and potentially lasting impact on creating, shaping, and supporting students' character strengths, behavioral goals and academic knowledge (SBSD, 2013). The level of self-awareness associated with these qualities and inner characteristics that a teacher brings into the learning environment is critical to effective teaching.

A teacher's presence in the classroom is the unwritten curriculum (Schoeberlein, 2009). We teach who we are. The most effective teaching, beyond technique and curriculum, includes a more subtle quality that profoundly affects the possible learning; the presence of the teacher informs students' experiences (Kessler, 1991). You do not need to be an expert — rather, you need to learn and practice yourself so you have an experiential foundation as a baseline for teaching (Brown et al., 2011). Mindful teaching is a key factor for the integration of mindfulness into the classroom and within the programs I highlight below. These programs share an underlying belief that mindfulness-trained educators embody mindful behaviors and attitudes

through their presence and interactions with students in the learning environment (Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

As educators we tend to focus more upon our students than ourselves. However, if we do not model what we want students to do, the impact on classroom learning will be far less than it could be. Social emotional learning programs that are poorly implemented can actually be detrimental to pro-social behavior (Lantieri et al., 2008). It is critical for teachers, administrators, and other school staff to do some sort of mindfulness practice that helps to settle their own stress response systems, attune to their students' emotional and instructional needs, and practice positive emotions. By engaging in this way, we create exemplary role models for the students, we become happier human beings, and staff burnout and turnover decreases (Hahn, 2011).

In brief, an educator's presence in the learning environment directly relates to his/her ability to foster relationships and is equally as important as any classroom instruction offered. Relationships are at the core of classroom interactions and learning. Students who feel respected and safe in the classroom are better equipped to learn; mindful teachers are more available to support students in this learning (Jennings et al., 2009; 2011, Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

2.4 Mindfulness Teacher Training Programs

This section reviews two samples of mindfulness-based training programs for teachers: Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) for Teachers and Mindfulness-Based Wellness Education (MBWE). These programs both emphasize the necessity of teachers embodying mindfulness in their own lives before they can feel comfortable and effectively teach it in the classroom. My synopsis identifies the key points of these programs, the populations in which they are working, and their research findings.

Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE)

The CARE intervention utilizes three primary instructional components: (a) emotional skills instruction, (b) mindfulness and stress reduction practices, and (c) listening and compassion exercises (Jennings et al., 2009). Since 2007, the CARE curriculum has been piloted with groups of teachers in Colorado, California, Pennsylvania, and New York (Jennings et al., 2009; Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2011).

The CARE program has been presented in multiple formats: two 2-day sessions; four day-long sessions spread out over four to five weeks, and a five day residential retreat at the Garrison Institute. I have attended CARE for Teachers at the Garrison Institute and can attest to its benefits. Intersession coaching by CARE facilitators over the phone or by email supports teachers' practice and application of mindfulness skills. The program involves a combination of instruction and experiential activities, with time for reflection and discussion built in to each day's session.

Preliminary studies, with both experienced teachers and student teachers, demonstrate promising results related to improvements in teachers' personal mindfulness, well-being, and in using a more "autonomy supportive motivational orientation in the classroom" (Jennings et al., 2011). One teacher explained how CARE helped her to be more responsive to a disruptive student:

> ...I can act in response to what is needed in the moment, rather than reacting to it. Taking deep breaths, I can calm myself down and notice what feelings his comments are triggering in me. I can see beyond his behavior…into his feelings and the needs behind those feelings which triggered his reaction. This way of relating to myself and others is a more compassionate way… (as cited in Jennings, 2011, p. 140.)

Mindfulness-Based Wellness Education (MBWE)

The MBWE program was developed at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). In response to the growing concern of teacher stress and burnout and inspired by the growth of mindfulness-based interventions for clinicians, Poulin, Mackenzie, Soloway, and Karaoylas (2008) designed this program targeting teachers-in-training. The MBWE program was first delivered in an elective course taught in the teacher training program at OISE/UT in January 2006, entitled "Stress and Burnout: Teacher and Student Applications."

Modeled on Kabat-Zinn's MBSR (1990) program, MBWE is an experiential 8-week health promotion intervention that uses the framework of a "wellness wheel" to illustrate the principles and practices of mindfulness. Though closely paralleling the MBSR program, the MBWE experiential curriculum has a formal focus on promoting a variety of wellness and teaching strategies, such as social wellness and mindful listening. Program participants receive a CD with guided mindfulness practices along with a wellness workbook and are asked to practice at least five days a week for 15-20 minutes (Soloway, 2011).

The first controlled 2-year study showed enhanced mindfulness and teacher self-efficacy among MBWE program participants compared to the control group. A mixed methodologies design was utilized for this study. The use of quantitative methods allowed for the testing of a series of hypotheses regarding the effectiveness of the treatment by comparing MBWE participants' scores on the outcomes of interest to those of control participants. The qualitative inquiry allowed for a more in-depth exploration of participants' experiences of the course and of the knowledge they learned. Interviews with participants after graduation revealed that although they struggled with independent mindfulness practice, they benefited from their participation in

the class, which led to specific health behavior changes such as increased physical activity. Some participants reported that they relied on their mindfulness practices in times of crisis; others shared the knowledge they learned with their students and observed that this was an effective and beneficial response to the needs of their classrooms. Additionally, increases in mindful behaviors predicted improved teaching self-efficacy and physical health assessments immediately following the training (Poulin et al., 2008; Poulin, 2009). Research findings illuminate the added-value of MBWE in pre-service teacher education by identifying five main themes of teacher candidates' experience of the training: (1) personal and professional character, (2) reflective practice, (3) holistic view of teaching, (4) social and emotional competence on practicum, and (5) engagement in teacher education (Soloway, 2011).

In summary, both these highlighted mindfulness-based programs are experientially based on teachers learning and cultivating mindfulness in their personal and professional lives. Such approaches recognize the importance of the teacher as an embodiment of mindfulness, and in turn provide students with an authentic, healthy role model. The overall results from both programs suggest that mindfulness-based interventions for teachers and teachers-in-training boost self-compassion, reduce stress and burnout, increase effective teaching behavior, and enhance attention.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Project Context

In my research I have identified an ongoing challenge in education: how to address teacher stress and burnout in realistic and meaningful ways. Most teacher training and professional development courses emphasize curricula implementation skills rather than the strengthening of social-emotional competencies that support teacher resilience. Bolstering a

teacher's inner resources in turn promotes a healthy classroom environment where teacher-student relationships can flourish together with learning.

Davidson et al. (2012) emphasize the necessity of cultivating a set of mental skills and social-emotional dispositions that are central to the aims of education in the 21st century – a phrase that is admittedly rather broad and vague. Fortunately, the aims of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District are made quite explicit on its website:

> The mission of professional development in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District is to provide comprehensive and sustained learning opportunities to improve effectiveness of teachers, principals and all staff, with the ultimate goal to increase student achievement and teach them skills needed for 21st century jobs.
>
> (http://www.k12northstar.org/departments/curriculum-department)

While the preparation of students for truly satisfying (and thereby sustainable) careers in the 21st century obviously entails giving them a solid grounding in academic skills, it must also include the development of mental and emotional strengths which are less easily quantified. Having established that teachers who *embody* skills are in an optimal position to impart them to students, I adapted and designed the standard MBSR curriculum to address the particular skills needed for FNSBSD educators to meet the growing demands of their jobs. I developed a course entitled *Mindfulness for Educators: Fostering Awareness and Resilience in the Classroom*. Its ultimate goal is to cultivate an awareness of mindfulness practices in education and provide teachers with stress reduction tools which enable them to achieve and maintain a sense of well-being and effectiveness in the classroom.

I focused my course design on teaching teachers because it is essential for them to have a direct experience of mindfulness in order to skillfully share it with students. Learning is

ultimately transformed by the cultivation of awareness and attention, the mindful embodiment and thoughtful presence of the teacher.

3.2 Course Framework

This course is derived from the formative work of a number of researchers and clinicians, many of whose studies I have cited throughout this project. First and foremost, Mindfulness for Educators integrates the basic themes and framework of Kabat-Zinn's (1990) Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) eight-week program. My course, however, is specifically designed for school professionals to learn, share, and practice effective MBSR techniques to better manage the stressors inherent in teaching and learning. Though numerous opportunities for sharing classroom applications are provided, the primary focus begins with how teachers and other school staff can establish a personal practice as a solid foundation from which to grow and share with their students. As one Fairbanks teacher confirms from her experience of the course, "I have learned that I need to begin with myself and practice mindfulness, understand it better for myself before initiating it in my classroom" (personal communication, March 11, 2014).

In alignment with the teacher proficiencies defined by The Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development as essential for educators to effectively prepare today's students, my course design targets the following Alaska Teacher Standards:

1. A teacher can describe the teacher's philosophy of education and demonstrate its relationship to the teacher's practice.

6. A teacher creates and maintains a learning environment in which all students are actively engaged and contributing members.

8. A teacher participates in and contributes to the teaching profession.

As I examine these target AK Teacher Standards identified above, it brings me back to my ultimate goal for this course: to provide teachers with professional tools to develop and maintain the awareness, inner strength, and resilience needed to deliver outstanding social, emotional, and instructional support to their students, particularly those at risk. Most of us come to teaching with an educational philosophy combining a zest for children, an ethic of service, and a mission to create a better world through the act/art of teaching others. We want to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment – a classroom community where all voices are heard and respected. But how do we realize such aspirations over the span of a school year or the stretch of a career if we are unable even to take care of ourselves within a system that often levies a punishing toll upon our hearts and passions?

Schools cannot promote academic, social, and personal development for students unless they are infused and undergirded by the presence of caring and intelligent teachers setting the tone and making the day in and day out decisions in their classrooms. In the words of a Fairbanks educator and mindfulness course participant, "As a teacher [sic] we really do have an enormous influence on the climate in our classroom and the way students interact with each other and with adults" (Personal communication, March 11, 2013).

3.3 Course Overview by Session: Descriptions and Objectives

In this section a description is provided of each session in my *Mindfulness for Educators* special topics course. I am by no means reinventing the wheel. As previously stated, this course is based on the original MBSR course by Kabat-Zinn (1990) and his colleagues at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and mirrors many of the foundational attitudes, themes presented, and formal practices learned. Specific adaptations for educators include changes related to length of practices, suggested informal practices, supplemental materials provided, and specific school-related activities. I have divided each session into a brief description of the

material covered; the content presented based on theme, activities/practices, and school/home connections; and a written summary that includes references to the appendices for specific handouts and supplemental reading materials that I provided through the duration of the course. I was available throughout the course by email, phone, or in person to support participants and answer any specific questions that arose. Participants were also invited to share articles, anecdotes, and challenges/successes as we explored mindfulness together.

1) <u>Session One</u>: An overview of the course and introduction to mindfulness, opening activities, theory and evidence for mind-body practices, experiential introduction to breath practice

- Theme: There is more right with you than wrong with you.
- Activities/Practices: What is mindfulness and why practice it? What makes the learning environment feel alive? What is the difference between "formal" and "informal" mindfulness practices? Introduction to sitting posture and breath practice.
- School/home practice: Take some time each day to reflect on at least one instance of informal practice. Optional reading materials provided.

In the first session an introduction to the course is provided (see Appendix A for Session One handout) through discussion and a brief presentation of what mindfulness is and what it is not (see Appendix B for Mindful Schools handout). It is important to establish a working definition of mindfulness as a group, so that it can be used as a foundation for our discussions throughout the course. This is also the time where we establish ourselves as a community of mindful educators. To assist the process of getting to know one another and to recall any intentions for being here, reflection questions are given with time to respond (Appendix C). The

responses are used as a spring board to set the tone and bridge the perspectives and experiences represented in the group of participants. A brief practice on mindful posture and observing the breath is given. The following is a sample "formal" mindful check-in practice used in class:

> *Take a few moments to be still in a comfortable, upright posture. Begin by feeling your body, feel your feet on the floor and your sitting bones on the chair. Can your shoulders relax a little, away from the ears? Can your facial muscles be soft? Perhaps this is the first break you've had amidst a busy day. Notice what you notice, allowing any waves of thought, emotion, or physical sensation to just be there. Breathing in, breathing out, being here right now with everything that is present for you in this moment, and this one…(about 5-10 minutes of checking in with yourself). As we come to the end of this mindful check-in, gently bring your awareness back into the room and take a moment to notice any changes in your body/mind.*

This provides a shared experience of a mindfulness practice to talk about as a whole group.

Already beginning in Session One, we learn ways of integrating mindfulness into our lives, both personally and professionally, through "formal" and "informal" practice. "Formal" practice is defined as a time during the day that we set aside to be mindful—for example, practicing breath awareness meditation. "Informal" practice is all the other moments of our day during which we can purposefully cultivate present-moment attention and awareness—by example, taking a shower, preparing a meal, speaking with our children or partners, participating in a business meeting, or driving the car are all occasions for being awake and aware. We discuss various ways we might practice mindfulness informally throughout our day. The homework for the week is to reflect on one example of informal practice each day (see Appendix

D for Reflecting on Informal Practice Record Sheet) and optional reading is provided (Appendices E & F).

2) **Session Two:** Mindfulness of the breath and the body: Learn to use the body-scan practice to cultivate a greater degree of awareness of how you react to stressful situations. Changing the way you perceive and respond to difficulties and challenges will impact the short and long-term effects of stress on your mind and body.

- Theme: The pause between stimulus and response, using Viktor Frankl's quote: *Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.*
- Activities/Practices: How to prepare for "formal" breath awareness practice, tips for better breathing, review of body language and the body scan practice. How do I spend my time? How do I relate/perceive stress at home and at work?
- School/home practice: As often as you remember, create a pause between stimulus and response (a deep breath before answering the phone, responding to an email, engaging a difficult student interaction, as examples). Record your formal practice.
- Supplemental resources for optional browsing: www.drdansiegel.com; www.mindful.org; www.stillquietplace.com; www.greatergood.berkeley.edu

In this session, we continue to develop the mindfulness skills we started to build upon in Session One. We expand on breath awareness practices (Appendix G) and review guidelines for finding a comfortable seat to support our efforts. The body scan practice (see Appendix H for an example) is introduced and options for standing are given as an alternative to sitting. In addition

to these formal practices, our informal practice of bringing mindfulness into our daily lives will be expanded upon.

Session Two also begins the process of looking into an important element taught in this course: the process of recognizing our perceptions about situations in which we find ourselves, and the opportunity that lies within this recognition as to how we are going to respond to what arises. We will come to notice that it is *how* we perceive and respond/react to difficult situations that is the foundation for stress, and typically not the stressor (situation) itself. Session Two broadens our awareness and ability to see what is present in our lives so we can investigate and explore how we are engaging these events. By exploring this valuable skill, we begin learning how to interrupt the conditioned, automatic Stress Reaction Cycle (Appendices I & J) and assert more choice in our lives. Ultimately, it is this *pause* between stimulus and response that is mindfulness.

Discussion topics for this session include what we know about acute and chronic stress and how it impacts the body. Participants share comments about the physical experience of stress in their own bodies, i.e. what they notice in stressful circumstances: increased heat (flushed face), rapid heart rate, perspiration, tension in certain areas of the body (jaw, shoulders, stomach, etc.). This leads us into discussion reviewing what mindfulness is and why/how we might choose to practice mindfulness to meet the stress we inevitably experience in our lives. The reality is that we all experience stress; however, we have a choice as to how we relate to it. This week participants begin their formal practice logs (Appendix K) and are invited to think about how they spend their time during the day (Appendix L) to support scheduling a regular practice period.

3) <u>Session Three</u>: The neurobiology of emotions and building resilience in the classroom: Develop your ability to concentrate, learn about the physiological and psychological bases of stress reactivity (revisit Appendices I & J), and experience mindful strategies for responding in positive, proactive ways to stressful situations (a responsive classroom).

- Theme: Mindfulness and the brain: neurons that fire together, wire together.
- Activities/Practices: Group check-in and share with a partner about how formal practice is going; discuss emotions and their importance; learn hand model of the brain; breath awareness/concentration practice
- School/home: Setting an intention, reflection questions (Appendix M), continue with formal practice log

In Session Three, we focus on the importance of emotions and the neurobiology behind them. We all have emotions, and they play an important role in our daily lives. Whether you identify as a person who is in touch with your emotions, or someone who more naturally suppresses them, everyone experiences different emotions each day. As teachers we deal with emotions all day long; our own and those of our students, colleagues, parents, administrators and those in our own families. The more we become aware of our emotions – how to recognize and label them – the better we are able to manage them. There is plenty to learn and understand about ourselves when we bring a mindful attention to our emotional patterns.

- One universally strong human tendency is to focus on negative experiences rather than positive ones – the brain's negativity bias (Hanson, 2009). The same could be said for emotions. This does not just apply to people who see the "glass half empty."

- Another common tendency is that when our emotions are negative, we want things to be different, something other than what they actually are – sometimes anxiously so. However, when we are feeling just fine, we often do not fully notice our positive or neutral states. If this sounds at all like a familiar story, the challenge for this week is to be mindful of your full range of emotions, positive and negative, without judging them or without analyzing how the situation could be different. This situation just is as it is.

4) **Session Four**: A half-day of formal mindfulness practice: includes mindful breathing, mindful movement, cultivating care and compassion, silent reflection and group process time

- Theme: Cultivating a Formal Practice
- Welcome and parameters of the session
- Drop-in practice and setting our intentions
- Mindful movement and posture awareness
- Standing yoga practice
- Compassion practice
- Deep relaxation lying down
- Group process and closing

Session Four is held in a studio space to provide a deeper experience of mindful relaxation. We explore the various formal practices that have been introduced in previous sessions, as well as some basic yoga postures and mindful movements that can easily be adapted for classroom environments.

5) **Session Five:** Mindful listening and interactions with others: learn the fundamentals of interpersonal mindfulness—applying awareness and presence at times when

communication becomes difficult or charged with strong emotions. Gain direct experience of a variety of styles for more effective and creative interpersonal communication.

- Theme: The art of mindful listening in our relationships with others
- Activities/Practices: Group check-in and drop-in practice; the art of listening guided visualization practice and discussion; mindful listening/reflection partner activity (see handout Appendix N), final project guidelines (Appendix O)
- School/home: Continue with formal practice log, mindful listening practice (more informally in daily life interactions) in relationships
- Supplemental resources for optional browsing:
  - Your Brain on the Internet: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKaWJ72x1rI&app=desktop
  - Congressman Tim Ryan for a Mindful Nation: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sZDM93HFGs&app=desktop
  - Mindfulness in the news: http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/shorewood-school-adds-mindfulness-training-to-improve-student-focus-b99213797z1-248940371.html

Understanding our own thoughts, emotions, and habits are important foundations for thoughtful interactions with others. Cultivating greater self-awareness can develop our abilities to be more present, patient, and compassionate in our relationships. One fundamental component of how we interact with others is communication. In Session Five, we continue to

build on what we have already established from our previous meetings: *mindfulness* increases our ability to pay attention to both internal and external stimuli. We will now direct that attention towards effective listening.

Being a skillful listener is a quality that deepens our relationships and our connections with others. Thoughtful listening facilitates a better understanding of others' experiences, ideas, and values. Let us reflect for a moment. What qualities do good listeners have? How does it feel to be listened to in this attentive way? The following is a sample guided practice used to get in touch with how our attention and ability to listen matters in our connections with others:

Take a few moments to settle in, finding a comfortable and elongated posture. Feel yourself supported in the chair; feel your feet on the floor; feel the breath moving in and out of your body. Allow your eyes to be soft in a downward gaze or simply let them close. Breathing in and breathing out. Now think of a time when you were with someone who was telling you something important or perhaps something difficult, and you were able to be fully present for this person (maybe it is a friend, a family member, a colleague, or a student). Notice how this experience is for you. Are you comfortable? Do you feel open and receptive? Imagine what it must feel like for this person to be receiving such kind attention. To move on, take a deep breath and bring your attention back to the body. Remember a time when someone came to you and you were distracted or perhaps did not want to hear what this person had to say. Notice how this feels. Is there any anxiety? Do you feel any bodily discomfort or tension? Once again come back to your breathing and gently let these visualizations go.

This guided practice leads us into a deeper discussion about what participants noticed and felt in each scenario. We come back to the characteristics of skillful listening and the importance of developing our own listening skills, particularly in our roles as educators.

Session Five closes with a partner activity in mindful listening (Appendix P). Participants are asked to select a poem from the provided collection; it could be the poem they contributed or another poem from the packet that speaks to them right now. Everyone has the opportunity to read their poem, listen to a poem, and then reflect on how each experience felt when done in this intentional way.

6) <u>Session Six</u>: A complete review of the course materials and practices, with an emphasis on carrying the momentum built throughout the course into your daily life and professional setting, an overview of available resources to support mindfulness both in and out of the classroom

- Theme: Sustaining practice: I can begin again in this moment.
- Activities/Practices: Body Scan (sitting or standing); Where have we been?; Drop-in practice; Course reflections/evaluation (see Appendix P); Where do we go from here?; Group share

During the final session of this course, time is given to reflect and review where we have been. By now participants have gotten to experience some of the benefits of mindfulness first-hand: increased awareness, more pauses between stimulus and response, greater sensitivity in relationships, decreased stress, and growing compassion towards self and others. This is really only the beginning. The more one continues to investigate and observe present moment experiences, the greater an understanding of one's emotions, thoughts, habitual patterns, and attitudes towards others can grow. Mindfulness is a practice and a life-long process of deepening awareness. The key is to keep doing it over and over again and to sustain a practice, which can be difficult. The good news is that even a little bit of mindfulness can go a long way.

Along with a review of several of the formal practices we learned throughout the course, an emphasis is placed on how these practices can be adapted for a variety of ages in the classroom. A resource bibliography was provided (Appendix Q) to each participant, and several of the listings were brought in for exploration. Time was given to complete the final reflection/evaluation questions (Appendix P). We ended with a discussion of where we go from here to support one another both in and out of the classroom setting.

Chapter 4 Reflections

4.1 Benefits for Teachers

The purpose of my research project was to develop and deliver a mindfulness course for educators – the first professional development of its kind in the FNSBSD. Having designed the course to be exploratory and to provide qualitative feedback on the impact of mindfulness training for teachers, I offered it in the spring semester of 2014 as a special topics course. A total of eleven educators participated, representing a variety of school professional roles and a broad spectrum of prior experience with mindfulness – from none whatsoever to regular practice. Common to all participants was a feeling of stress in their current positions, an awareness of stress in their students and adult colleagues, and finally a desire to learn techniques to enhance their work with students and their overall well-being by exploring the practice of mindfulness. In the words of a participant:

> My intention originally was to learn ways to reduce stress in my life, slow down, and help students in my classroom. I have learned that I need to begin with myself and practice mindfulness, understand it better before initiating it in my classroom. I am feeling much calmer in my life personally and this translates into a calmer and more caring atmosphere in my classroom. (Anonymous, 2013)

Other first-person perspectives on the experience of the course were gathered from participants through personal communications and written responses to provided reflection questions. The educators' responses were then aggregated and analyzed for any themes and relevant trends. Qualitative examination revealed participants in general perceived tangible benefits in both their personal and professional lives. Common thematic trends in reflective accounts from educators included gains in staying present, increased patience with students and colleagues, a sense of calm from simply remembering to pause and breath, and overall improvements to classroom environments, including reduced stress levels. A sample of typical responses is reflective below:

- *I am feeling much calmer in my life personally and this translates into a calmer and more caring atmosphere in my classroom.*
- *Prior to beginning mindfulness, I would get caught up in a cycle of negative reactivity to student behaviors during my classes. I would be reduced to tenseness, annoyance, and, often times, despair, ultimately raising my voice (yes, even yelling) at the children.*
- *I've learned what mindfulness is—being present in the moment nonjudgmentally. What helped me was learning to do the formal practice and trying to be nonjudgmental—seeing/learning how to use it for students with impulsivity issues.*
- *I feel much better now that I learned a few skills to help me embrace the challenges of life in our schools (and beyond). I came to your class out of desperation. That first day I was almost in tears because I was so exhausted. so overwhelmed. so frustrated...I didn't feel I was able to use my talents to the fullest because there just wasn't the "time". I learned it is okay to pause and also be aware of the fact that we are breathing... As a result of your class, I became more aware of myself..*

- *I feel I have learned how important it is to take time to practice and take care of myself…*
- *I have become a better listener to my students, my family, and my colleagues…*

A strong theme that I noticed deeply woven in these responses from participant educators is that they clearly expanded their understanding of mindfulness practices. Their participation in this course caused them to think reflectively about their inner lives as educators, to notice their thoughts, emotions, and stresses. This tangible introspection created a deeper awareness to the ways in which they began to search for more balance in the busyness of their daily lives, particularly as they all reported feeling over-extended and over-scheduled in their professional demands.

Another robust area of inquiry is whether or not mindfulness participants would recommend this course or a similar training to their colleagues. Despite the magnitude of existing requirements for educators in general, 100% of the participants stated they would urge colleagues to take part and would like to participate in another mindfulness course offering themselves. A sample of participants' responses is offered below:

- *Yes! The practical implications for improving students' lives is immense but the taking care of self and learning to live mindfully as a teacher is essential to it.*
- *Yes, I would!! I would highly recommend it. As a matter of fact, I have mentioned it to some of my co-workers and explained how it helped me focus on one thing at a time throughout the busyness of the day. I enjoyed this course. It changed my life for the better!*
- *Yes! Teaching is a very stressful profession and <u>all</u> teachers would benefit from mindfulness practice and in turn their students.*

- *I would definitely recommend this to people in all walks of life. We would all benefit from being mindful. Educators have an influence on so many hearts and minds each day that I have recommended it to many. So I hope there is more training to come.*
- *Definitely—it has been beneficial to me and I feel it would be beneficial to others—would like to share these experiences with other educators of similar mind*
- *Yes, most definitely. Staff deserves this opportunity to gain a VALUABLE, useable resource to enrich first themselves and in turn their students.*

4.2 Impact on Student Learning

The Mindfulness for Educators course I designed presumes to have both direct and indirect impact on the professional experiences of participants. One such indirect impact is any correlated benefit to students that occurs as the participant educators grow in their application of mindfulness skills. As part of the course, participants were given ways to incorporate mindfulness practices and skills into their classroom work with students using a variety of suggested resources and strategies: breath awareness, mindful movement, literature, reflective writing, and ideas for studying the brain with children, as examples. A strong majority of participants reported a variety of perceived changes in their classrooms resulting from their explorations of mindfulness. Any of the following notable changes is corroborated in the observations of the participants, specifically by the classroom teachers:

- Management of class was easier; absence of struggle in teaching the lesson
- Calmer (students & teachers)
- More attentive (students & teachers) – to lessons; to personal state of others
- More interested
- Enjoyment, anticipation of chime or bell used during mindful breathing practice

- Quiet. Students were quieter while listening and working. Teachers themselves were speaking more softly.

A sample of typical responses from course participants is reflected below:

- *…what I found was that the students were interested in every aspect of the lesson. They listened quietly while I explained …*
- *I purposefully had the mindfulness lesson just after recess and before math because that is the time when it is hardest for the students to focus…the students worked for a solid 45 minutes without talking, asking questions of their neighbors or me.*
- *I am heartened by the positive responses of students. I see them learning to manage their own behavior…and that they are the experts about themselves (and can notice what works better for them).*
- *One big difference that I noticed was that I didn't have to struggle to teach the lesson. When I did not have the stress of class management, I could think and teach in a more organized manner. I don't often raise my voice, but, I noticed today I actually lowered my voice for most of the day.*
- *It is just small increments but it is definitely noticeable. Management is so much easier…The students really like listening for the singing bowl and today they added in listening for external sounds. They are starting to pay attention better. The students seem to be calmer and it feels like they are picking up on my more calm attitude.*
- *We pause more in the classroom to talk about social/emotional issues that are brought up by the students, and they feel heard.*
- *Since I've become calmer, my voice is softer in the classroom, and I've found myself relating and listening better to my students. The atmosphere in my classroom has been*

gradually changing in a positive way, and I'm seeing and experiencing more acts of kindness and fewer conflicts

Such responses suggest that even a brief modicum of mindfulness yields noticeable benefits. Dedicated, sustained practice holds immeasurable potential for positive change. As educators we cannot avoid stress, but by changing our relationship to it we can become more resilient and compassionate in the face of life's vicissitudes — both in and out of the classroom. The desire to change must come from within us, but once experienced first-hand, the practices of mindfulness speak for themselves.

I envision teaching the course again and feel it would be beneficial to offer one section near the start of the school year to set the intention and to help establish some mindfulness techniques early on. My course could easily be adapted for inclusion in district-wide professional trainings or at specific building sites during in-service days. Ultimately, I would like to see a mindfulness course incorporated into higher education for pre-service teachers.

The educator participants expressed interest in cultivating the practices they learned in my recent course, and in supporting one another in the process. At their request, I plan to soon begin hosting a monthly mindfulness group for them. I will encourage them to invite others from their building communities who might be interested in learning more, hoping in this way to expand awareness throughout the district. The monthly session will include formal practice, a question and answer period, and a forum to share challenges and successes that arise.

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Appendix A

Mindfulness for Educators: Session One

The education of attention would be an education par excellence.
-William James

Welcome. Over the span of our time together, we will be developing a strong foundation of mindfulness. Jon Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as "the awareness that unfolds as we pay attention, on purpose, in the present moment." Think about it: the past is gone, and the future has not yet arrived. Therefore, in a very real way, the present moment is the only time any of us has for perceiving, learning, growing, and healing. It is from the awareness born out of mindfulness that we have the chance to recognize and respond more proactively and effectively to the challenges and demands of everyday life.

Starting in Session One, we will learn ways of integrating mindfulness into our lives through formal and informal mindfulness practice. "Formal" practice is defined as a time during the day that we set aside to be mindful—for example, practicing breath awareness meditation. "Informal" practice is all the other moments of our day during which we can purposefully *cultivate* present-moment attention and awareness—by example, taking a shower, preparing a meal, speaking with our children or partners, participating in a business meeting, or driving the car are all occasions for being awake and aware. During Session One, you will learn to practice breath awareness as a means of becoming familiar with and cultivating awareness (mindfulness) of the mind/body.

From a mindfulness point of view, no matter what challenges you are facing or physical conditions you may be experiencing, there is more right with you than wrong with you. Likewise, experience tells us that the challenges and difficulties you are facing are workable. This has nothing to do with liking these situations or "reframing" them in some disingenuous manner. Rather, it is a perspective that expresses and reflects the genius within you and all human beings and can be tapped through the practice of mindfulness.

Appendix B

Mindful Schools

Mindfulness – What it is and is not

More and more people worldwide are attracted to learning how to relate to their experience with mindfulness. Because of my own personal experience and through work with over 350 students and teachers, I've encountered some common misconceptions. I share this with the teachers with whom I work in K-5 before I teach their students. It puts us all on the same page. I hope you find it helpful and that it helps you relax when you practice.

What Is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness, as defined by Jon Kabat-Zinn who introduced Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) 30 years ago, is "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally."

Mindfulness is not about being calm or any particular way

We often expect mindfulness will bring us peace or calm and relaxation. This highlights our human tendency to want pleasant experiences and to push away what is unpleasant or average. We want something, we don't get it and then we're unhappy. We think it's not working or we're doing it wrong. We start to judge our experience and ourselves.

Although it's true that you can experience a sense of peace, calm, or relaxation while practicing mindfulness, these are not guaranteed outcomes. Mindfulness is just about noticing whatever experience we're having, including all the thoughts, feelings or physical sensations that are a part of it.

Mindfulness can significantly reduce stress but it's not about stress reduction

Rather than remove stress, mindfulness helps us learn to relate to stress differently. It may seem implausible that something as simple as listening to sounds or paying attention to our breathing can help us learn to respond to experiences in a healthy way, but it's what science is showing and what people are saying (and it's certainly my experience).

There is now over 25 years of research with adults showing that mindfulness helps with stress by changing our relationship to it.

Mindfulness is not the absence of thought

Instead of aiming for an empty or blank mind where no thoughts are present, we learn the skill of becoming aware of our thoughts, without necessarily doing anything with them. By just noticing thoughts, we learn how to unhook ourselves from our identification with them. This is

Appendix B (continued)

different from pushing thoughts away. It's how we relate to our thoughts, not the absence of them.

Mindfulness is not about being complacent

Acceptance does not mean agreement or complacency. It means acknowledging whatever's going on, which is a good idea because it's already happening. We take action to change situations when appropriate - for our well-being and the well-being of others - but we do so out of compassion and understanding versus reaction and frustration.

Mindfulness is not religious

Mindfulness practices are useful for all people, regardless of their spiritual or religious backgrounds or beliefs. It's a human experience that utilizes awareness and compassion that is within us all.

Mindfulness is not a silver bullet

When we're under stress or going through a difficult time we might look for 'techniques' to help us better cope. Mindfulness works, but it is important to approach it with the right attitude. Based on many years of research, it is well established that in order to fully benefit from mindfulness meditation, the best approach is to have a long-term view.

Happy Practicing! And please email me if you have questions about any of this.

Appendix C

Session One Reflection Questions:
Throughout this course I will be offering you questions to reflect upon to help guide, focus, and deepen your experience.

If you were to give your life a "book title" at this time, what would it be?

What is your current background and/or experience with mindfulness?

What is your intention for this course? What brought you here? What do you hope to learn?

What is one worry you might have? What is difficult about your work?

What do you most enjoy about your work? What makes the classroom/learning environment come alive?

Appendix D

Reflecting on Informal Practice

Take some time every day to reflect on at least one instance of informal practice. You can use what you learn from these reflections to deepen your daily informal practice. Again, we've included an example to help you see how to use the log.

Practice	What was the situation?	What did you notice before?	What did you notice after?	What did you learn?
Mindful eating	*I was having lunch with a friend and noticed I was almost finished and hadn't really tasted the food.*	*Emotions: Anxious Thoughts: "Boy do I have a lot of work left to do in my classroom." Sensations: Tension in shoulders, swirling stomach*	*When I brought my attention to the taste of the food and the sensations of chewing, my body began to calm and I noticed how good the food tasted. I felt less frazzled and enjoyed myself more.*	*When I slow down in my eating, I notice that I taste the food more, and that this can be like an island of calm in a busy day. I also learned how much I like beets in my salad!*

taken from *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook* by Stahl & Goldstein (2010)

Appendix E

Dos and Don'ts When Teaching Mindfulness
by Deborah Schoeberlein in *Huffpost Health Living*, February 2013

In education, we always try to emphasize the positive and encourage best practices; after all, promoting something good is more palatable and typically more effective than discouraging something bad.

It's sort of like what happens when you're driving on a road laced by potholes: It's best to look at the smooth pavement so you automatically steer clear to safety. If you get fixated on the potholes, you're likely to end up in them. Same thing with skiing: Instructors tell students to look at the snowy path between the trees – not at them.

But sometimes, well, it's just simpler to draw attention, directly, to what's best avoided. Sometimes there's a pothole you really need to miss, or the tree that, well, you just can't hit. The same applies to identifying – and avoiding – some of the common mistakes that well-intentioned people make when teaching mindfulness. In particular, people:

- Teach about mindfulness without mindfulness.
- Suggest that they know more about mindfulness than they really do.
- Promise results inappropriately.
- Privilege their approach to mindfulness over others.
- Believe that mindfulness can be taught and learned conceptually vs. through experiential practice.
- Present the daily practice as magical, exciting and immediately uplifting.
- Assume that practicing mindfulness means you're automatically mindful.

Having named the negatives, I'd like to offer some suggestions.

- **Model what you teach:** Your presence in the classroom is more important than any specific instructions you can offer. The idea is to demonstrate mindfulness by paying attention to what's happening in – and around you, in current moment. That's the real process and outcome of the practice; the techniques are simply methods for training.
- **Be honest about your own experience:** If you practice mindfulness, acknowledge that you have some experiential familiarity with the techniques. If you aren't a practitioner, 'fess up – neither are your students, so you'll learn together. As long as everyone understands the situation, that's just fine, just avoid letting them believe you really know what you're talking about if you don't.
- **Remember that mindfulness is a practice:** Of course, the practice of mindfulness begins as soon as you begin training, but it's an ongoing experience that yields greater results with time. The brain is a muscle, and like every other muscle in the body, it gains fitness with effort and over time. Developing mental fitness is a daily activity.
- **Respect where your knowledge comes from**: If you learned mindfulness practice in a secular context, such as through mental health training or athletic coaching, that's fine. Likewise, if you learned in a Buddhist setting or a yoga studio, that's fine too. Just

Appendix E (continued)

- understand that there are many roads to mindfulness, and encourage your students to find the route – and guide – that works best for them.
- **Emphasize the importance of personal experience**: Ultimately, it's up to each of us to discipline our own mind and watch what happens. If you practice, you'll benefit, and your confidence and understanding will grow. Reading, thinking or talking about mindfulness can't take the place of actually watching your mind.
- **Acknowledge reality:** If your brain was spinning out of control with too many thoughts and emotions before you started practicing mindfulness, you're likely to feel even worse when you begin witnessing what's really going on. That's normal, and interesting, but definitely not fun. Practicing mindfulness takes time; it's often boring and tedious and uncomfortable in all sorts of ways, so the decision to submit to the rigor is powerful and personal. This highlights why finding a teacher, or at least a more experienced friend, to support your process is so essential.
- **Remember that practicing mindfulness is practical, not magical:** The research shows many benefits: It does help improve attention, emotional regulation and resilience, and it does help enhance mental and physical health. But it's a training process that moves inside your consciousness and only by your choice. Mindfulness develops over time; be humble about the process and enjoy the ride.

Appendix F

Raising Mindful Children

A dialogue with Ronald Siegel, PsyD and Elisha Goldstein, PhD
The National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine
www.nicabm.com

Dr. Goldstein: One of the central pieces that comes into treating children versus treating adults is the idea of making mindfulness a little more playful and imaginative at times.

Make Mindfulness Playful

With children, I would say that it's great to bring in images. So if you're focusing on breathing, if you're bringing attention to the breath for the child, maybe they're laying down, but you're asking them to see if they can fill up their abdomen or their stomach like a balloon. They get this playful idea going because they associate balloons with parties or birthdays. So, we can teach the breath with the image of the balloon - filling up like a balloon and then letting the air out.

Basically, you're teaching them to breathe, and at the same time you're making it playful; you're making it imaginative. Susan Kaiser Greenland has a great way of bringing more of the compassion practices to children.

She asks them to send friendly wishes to their friends. First they start out with sending friendly wishes to themselves, so they imagine themselves as happy, having fun, and being healthy and safe. Then, they send those friendly wishes out to a friend and maybe to an acquaintance, to their family, or even to someone they're having difficulty with.

In doing that kind of practice, they find that they might start naturally sending friendly wishes in some way, which has been found, at least in my experience, to create a sense of good feeling…or even a sense of resiliency during the more difficult times.

Shorter Practices for Shorter Attention Spans

Dr. Siegel: The other thing to keep in mind is simply that kids have shorter attention spans than adults. They're less likely to be able to focus on more subtle objects of attention. So with kids, we want to use coarser objects of attention, such as the sound of the ringing of a bell, perhaps. Or we could use the sensations of eating an apple, or some kind of movement through space, just something that's coarser, a more tangible object of awareness.

Then, we want to structure it so that the periods of meditation (if you're doing formal meditation) are going to be shorter. You'd also want to structure it so there might be some inherent interest. So, for instance, if you were listening to the sound of a bell, you might ask the kids to listen to the bell and also count how many times it rings.

I've tried this with adult audiences. Adults usually find that the counting is intrusive; it takes away from really listening well. But kids often find the counting to be helpful - it's like a latency-age game.

Appendix F (continued)

Teach By Example

The place where we make the most progress in introducing mindfulness practices with children isn't in working with the children directly, it's in working with children's caregivers and helping them to be able to be present with their kids, flexible in reaction, and to not be so personally reactive to the various things that the kids do.

Appendix G

CHANGE YOUR BREATHING– AND YOUR HEALTH – TODAY

"There's no single more powerful – or more simple – daily practice to further your health and well-being than breathwork. If today you can be aware of breathing for ten seconds more than you were yesterday, you will have taken a measurable step toward expanded consciousness, deeper communication between mind and body, and integration of your physical, mental, and spiritual functions. I can recommend no single more powerful – or more simple – daily practice to further your health and well-being." –Andrew Weil, M.D.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR "FORMAL" BREATH AWARENESS PRACTICE

To do breathing work, find a quiet place with no distractions. Sit comfortably and keep your spine long (upright, not uptight). Make sure your head is in a comfortable position. You can close your eyes or keep them open (or halfway open).

Homework: I would like you to practice the following breathwork techniques at least five days/week (5-10 minutes a day is a good amount of time to aim for; setting a timer or listening to a recorded practice is helpful). Briefly check-in and make note of your practice times and observations on the formal practice log. Find time(s) in the day when this practice feels natural and logical and when you will not be interrupted, and make a resolution to do it at those times. The amount of time you spend on this work is not important; regularity is. Only with constancy of input over time can you change the rhythms in your nervous system for better health.

EXERCISES

Following Your Breath:

This is the simplest of all breathing exercises. Just put your attention on your breath, without trying to influence it. Do not try to speed it up, slow it down, or change the rhythm; just follow it with your mind. Notice the contours of the cycles of inhalation and exhalation; notice how difficult it is to pinpoint the change between inhalation and exhalation (the pause between each breath).

When you attempt to follow your breath, you may find that your attention wanders – usually to thoughts and images. Every time you become aware that this is happening, just **gently** bring your attention back to your breath.

Notice where you are observing your breath. Is it the movement of air into the nostrils? Is it the movement of air through the passages of the nose and throat? Is it the movement of air into the chest; the expansion of the chest; the expansion of the abdomen? There is no one right way to do this. You may observe the breath at more than one place.

Make a practice of observing your breath for a few minutes a day. If you like, you can start by doing it for two or three minutes in the morning, to open your session of breathing exercises. You can also try to lengthen this period as a form of meditation.

Appendix G (continued)

TIPS FOR BETTER BREATHING: Here are some simple suggestions you can practice "informally" during the course of your day (mindful breathing in and out of the classroom). Being aware of your breath in these ways on a daily basis can significantly help you to breathe more fully and deeply.

1. Observe Your Breath

The ***Following Your Breath*** exercise is one you can do informally, any time: while waiting in line, sitting at a stoplight, or listening to a lecture. Whatever you are doing, look at your breath without trying to influence it. It is a good way to take a little break from the normal flow of thoughts, images, and attention to external stimuli, and putting your mind briefly in a neutral place.

If you find yourself in stressful situations, before you react, you can also try putting your attention on your breath. If you are in physical pain, or cannot get to sleep because you are caught in thoughts, try putting your attention on your breath.

2. Breathe Abdominally

In order to take the fullest kind of breath, you have to do what is called "abdominal breathing": that is, when you take a deep breath, your belly should move outward. To find out whether this is happening, just put your hand on your abdomen and see whether it moves outward as your belly expands.

Many of us do not let our abdomens expand freely as we breathe. We restrict those muscles, and as a result are unable to take a full, deep breath. So another general tip about breathing is to practice just taking some deep breaths and letting the belly move outward. Only when that movement occurs are you taking the full volume of air into your lungs that you are capable of taking in.

3. Squeeze out More Air

Whenever you think about it, at the end of a breath try squeezing more air out of your lungs. Use those intercostal muscles. If you practice this exercise regularly, you will deepen and lengthen the period of exhalation until it equals inhalation (typically, inhalation takes about three times longer than exhalation). In doing so, you will be moving much more air in and out of your lungs.

Make your breath deeper, slower, quieter, and more regular.

This is another exercise you can do informally, throughout the day. Whenever you think of it – whether you are driving, waiting for someone, watching a movie, or eating dinner – try to make your breath deeper, slower, quieter, and more regular. Over time, your breath will change in that direction and you will feel better in both mind and body. Your nervous system will function more smoothly, and all your organs will operate more harmoniously.

Some excerpts from *Breathing: The Master Key to Self-Healing* by Dr. Andrew Weil (1999)

Appendix H

Body Language

When was the last time you gave your body a break? And we're not talking about sleep. Take ten minutes and try the body scan practice.

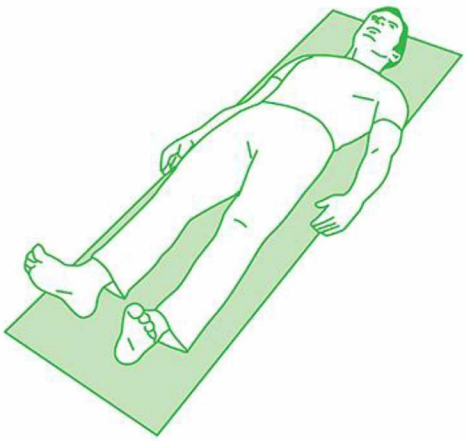


Illustration by Jason Lee
By Susan Bauer-Wu

Time: 10–20 minutes

When was the last time you noticed how your body was feeling? Not just when you have a headache or you're tired or you have heartburn after that spicy taco you ate for lunch. But just noticing how your body is feeling right now, while you're sitting or standing or lying down. How about noticing how your body feels while you're sitting in an important meeting or walking down the street or playing with your children?

In our busy, high-tech, low-touch lives, it's easy to operate detached from our own bodies. They too easily become vessels we feed, water, and rest so they can continue to cart around our brains. We don't pay attention to the information our bodies are sending us or the effect that forces such as stress are having—until real health problems set in.

Let's take a small and simple step in the direction of paying our body the attention it is due. Consider spending just a few minutes—every day, if you can—to notice your own physicality. Not to judge your body or worry about it or push it harder at the gym, but to *be* in it.

Appendix H (continued)

Here's an easy body-scan practice to try. It will tune you in to your body and anchor you to where you are right now. It will heighten your senses and help you achieve greater levels of relaxation. You can do it sitting in a chair or on the floor, lying down, or standing.

1. Settle into a comfortable position, so you feel supported and relaxed.

2. Close your eyes if you wish or leave them open with a soft gaze, not focusing on anything in particular.

3. Rest for a few moments, paying attention to the natural rhythm of your breathing.

4. Once your body and mind are settled, bring awareness to your body as a whole. Be aware of your body resting and being supported by the chair, mattress, or floor.

5. Begin to focus your attention on different parts of your body. You can spotlight one particular area or go through a sequence like this: toes, feet (sole, heel, top of foot), through the legs, pelvis, abdomen, lower back, upper back, chest shoulders, arms down to the fingers, shoulders, neck, different parts of the face, and head.

6. For each part of the body, linger for a few moments and notice the different sensations as you focus.

7. The moment you notice that your mind has wandered, return your attention to the part of the body you last remember.

If you fall asleep during this body-scan practice, that's okay. When you realize you've been nodding off, take a deep breath to help you reawaken and perhaps reposition your body (which will also help wake it up). When you're ready, return your attention to the part of the body you last remember focusing on.

Susan Bauer-Wu, PhD, is the director of the Compassionate Care Initiative at the University of Virginia School of Nursing and the author of Leaves Falling Gently: Living Fully with Serious & Life-Limiting Illness through Mindfulness, Compassion & Connectedness.

This article also appeared in the February 2014 issue of *Mindful* magazine.

Appendix I

Stress Reaction Cycle

In this course, we have been exploring and developing our ability to attend to what is present within the body and the mind in the present moment. This practice, over time, builds a strong, stable foundation from which we can look more closely and dispassionately at the stressors and stress in our lives. In essence, we are cultivating the skill to look at (rather than *through* the lens of) these habits and patterns from a broader, wiser, and more balanced perspective. We're building our "mindfulness muscles," if you will.

You've probably noticed that when you come up against a stressful situation, the usual choices involve fighting, fleeing, or freezing. The cascade of physiological events that follows this internal, largely unconscious process is governed by the hypothalamus, and pituitary and adrenal glands. These structures flood the body with the hormones necessary to prepare us to effectively meet the perceived threat. At this stage, the body becomes hyperaroused. For example, blood pressure may rise, pulse increases, and blood is moved from some regions of the body to others to meet the threat. This can happen whether the perceived threat is external or is occurring within the envelope of the mind and body.

Largely speaking, these physiological processes are "hardwired"; they are involuntary and have evolved to help protect us. These are our body's natural coping mechanisms. In and of themselves, they are protective, not problematic. However, through repeated or chronic exposure to single or multiple stressors, a whole host of health problems can arise as a consequence of the overuse of this protective mechanism. These may include, to name a few: sleep disorders, digestive problems, arrhythmias, chronic headaches, backaches, and anxiety.

Continued exposure to this chronic state of hyperarousal requires the body to mount a series of maladaptive coping strategies. At some time in our lives, these strategies may have been protective, serving us well. However, in their habitual, unregulated state, they can create an unhealthy condition of chronic hyperarousal and incur the health risks associated with this habitual, reactive pattern. To cope, we often overeat or overwork, engage in self-destructive behaviors, and abuse drugs, alcohol,
cigarettes, caffeine, and food to mask the situations in which we find ourselves.

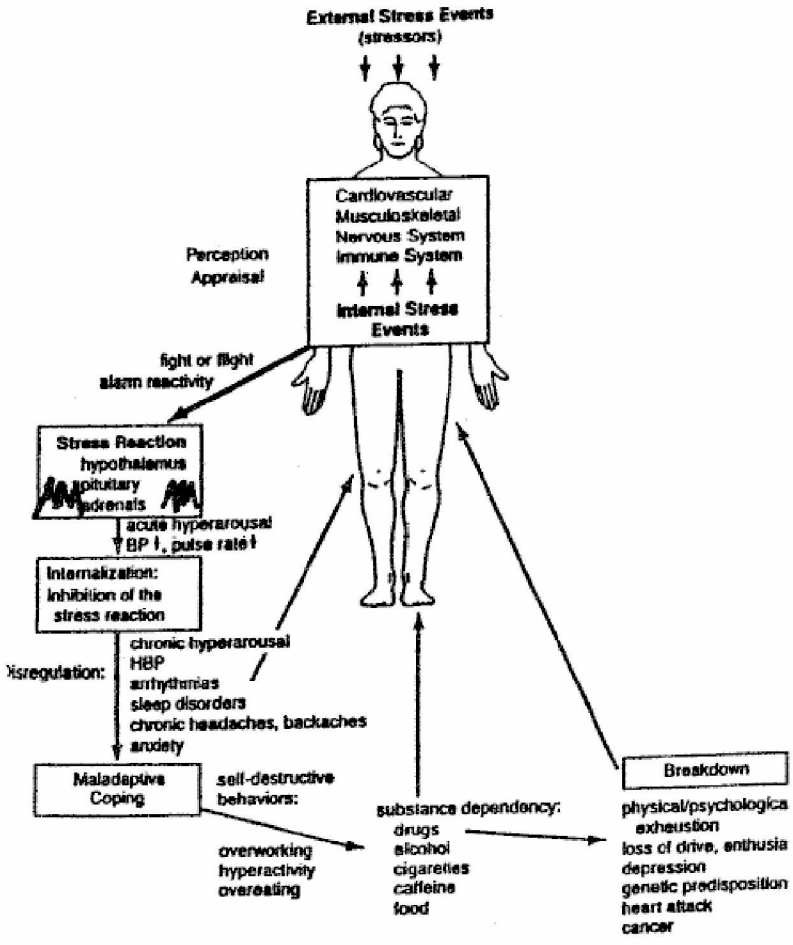
These maladaptive coping strategies have the added effect of creating more physical and psychological strain. They often lead to exhaustion and to depletion of our coping resources, making us less capable of effectively coping with stress and perpetuating a cycle that can lead to health risks and burn-out.

Appendix J

The Stress REACTION Cycle – how a ramped-up, highly activated nervous system reacts to stressful events (both internal and external)

The brain (hypothalamus and pituitary) sends **massive** signals to the adrenals: ALARM, ALARM!!

The reaction to stress (whether actual or perceived) generates physiological reactions and behaviors that, in turn, generate more stress/stressful reactions. The system spirals into increasingly greater dysregulation. (The reversal of this negative spiral is on p. 2.)



Both illustrations from *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness*, by Jon Kabat-Zinn (http://www.mindfulnesscds.com/books.html)

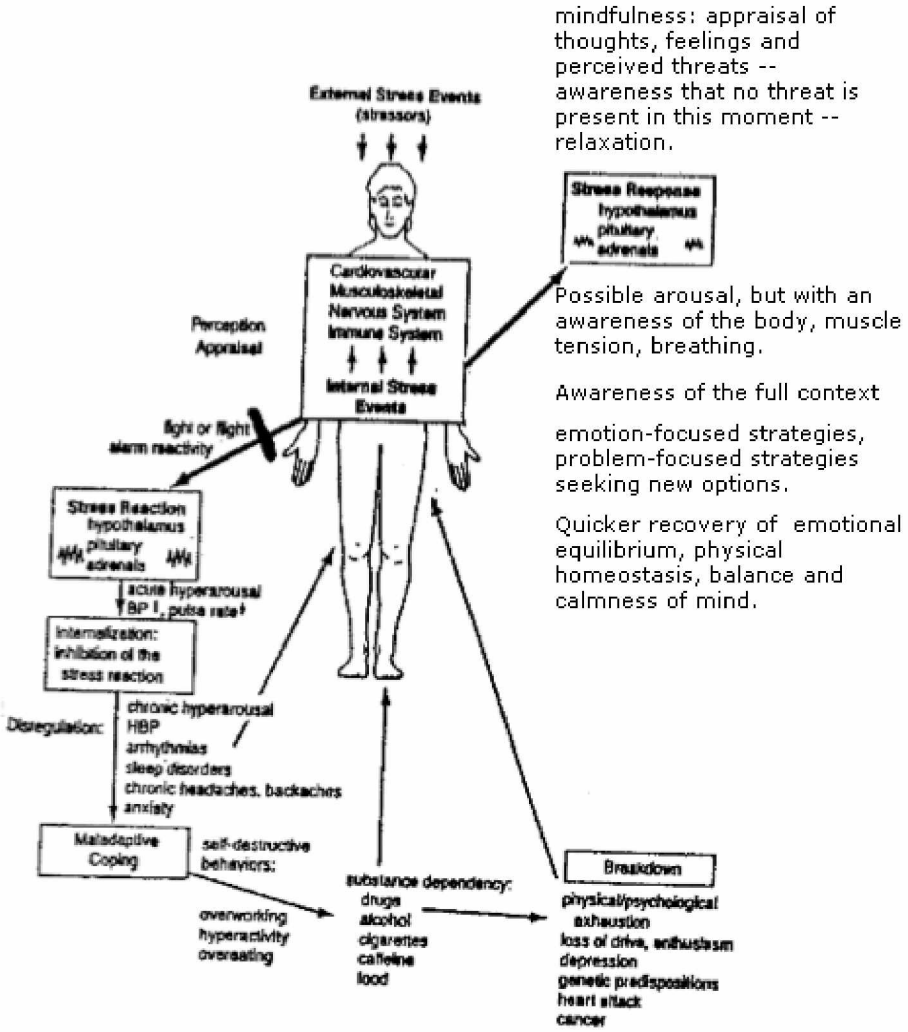
Appendix J (continued)

The Stress RESPONSE Cycle: calming a highly activated nervous system can diminish an overactive stress REACTION (from p. 1)

We learn to access resources, both internal and external, that signal the brain it's safe – no immediate danger threatens in this moment. This sends **calming** signals to the adrenals: no need to create uproar. It's like removing the fuel from a blazing fire, or putting on the brakes in a runaway train.

This measured response to stress generates grounding, stabilizing physiological reactions and behaviors that, in turn, generate more soothing, relaxing body-mind states. The system spirals into increasingly greater regulation.

Coping with Stress: **RESPONDING** rather than REACTING



Appendix K

Formal Practice Log

Each time you do a formal practice, fill out the following log. As you fill it out, and as you look back over the previous week's practice, think about how your practice has been going. Do you notice any patterns about what works best for you? What changes could you make to sustain the discipline? In case you're unsure of how to use the log, an example is provided.

Date and Formal Practice	**Time**	**Thoughts, feelings, and sensations that arose during practice and how you felt afterwards**
2/21 *Mindful check-in*	*8 a.m.*	*My mind kept wandering to all the work I have to do today. I noticed a tightening in my chest at times, but it subsided. The tightness in my chest was anxiousness, and I felt more calm after the practice.*

taken from *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook* by Stahl & Goldstein (2010)

Appendix L

HOW DO I SPEND MY TIME?

Directions: Think about a typical work day and write down your usual activities. Rate each activity according to how much you enjoy it using the 1-4 scale where 1 = not enjoyable and 4 = very enjoyable and rate each activity according to whether the focus is on yourself or other(s).

Time	Typical Work Day	Enjoyment				Focus	
Spent	Activities	1	2	3	4	Self	Other
	TOTALS						

Add up how much time you spend on a typical work day doing things for yourself that you enjoy.

_____ **hours**

Appendix L (continued)

THINGS I ENJOY

Directions: Write down a list of all the things that you can think of that you really enjoy that you do for yourself. Examples might be: taking a bubble bath, taking a walk in the woods, listening to my favorite music, reading a romance novel, playing tennis, working out at the gym, etc. We can think about these activities as supporting four aspects of our personal growth and development: physical, emotional, intellectual, and the inner life. After each activity, check which aspect it supports. Activities can support more than one aspect of your development.

Things I Do Now:

Activity	Physical	Emotional	Intellectual	Inner Life

Things I Would Like to Do:

Activity	Physical	Emotional	Intellectual	Inner Life

Both diagrams taken from CARE Workbook (2011)

Appendix M

Name:
Session Three Reflection Questions:

When you practice mindfulness, remember you are a scientist and not a judge.

1) Where are you starting from right now? How do you feel? Do you have any noticeable sensations in the physical body? How is your emotional state? What do you notice about the quality of your mind/the quality of your breath?

2) After the "drop-in" practice, has anything changed for you? What do you notice?

3) Do you have any questions? How did your practice of mindfulness go over the past two weeks? Any challenges? Any celebrations?

4) What are the top stressors for you at work? How do you manage your stress? Do you take work home with you? In what ways?

5) How do you respond to "difficult" situations/students? How does your way of responding feel inside?

Appendix N

Exercise: Mindful Listening with Poetry

Reader (A) Reflection Questions:

- How did it feel to be listened to in this way?
- What emotions did you experience as you read the poem – this could be in response to the poem itself or in response to the exercise?
- Did you notice your attention focused on the relational quality of "feeling felt" by your partner? What was that like for you?

Listener (B) Reflection Questions:

- How did it feel to just listen and not respond with words?
- What emotions did you experience in response to the poem and/or the activity itself?
- Did you notice your attention focused on the relational sense of attuning to the reader's experience?

Appendix O

Final Assignment:

You can either create a *mindfulness* lesson plan that includes a reflection on how things went and what you noticed during delivery OR you can document your formal practice and turn in your practice log with a personal reflection based on your discoveries.

Please include your inner experiences, sensations, thoughts, and emotions, as this, too, is part of mindful awareness. You may also find that questions arise regarding your experiences; please include them in your reflections as well.

Do let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to reading your work and learning from your own journey and adventures in mindfulness.

Appendix P

Name:
Final Reflection Questions/Evaluation:
1) What is the title of your life's book now, in this moment?

2) Revisit your intention(s) for this course. What have you learned? What strategies have helped you both personally and professionally? What would you still like to explore/know?

3) How do you plan to use mindfulness going forward?

4) What challenges do you face in keeping a mindfulness practice?

5) What would be helpful and supportive to you as you continue?

6) Would you recommend this course to other educators? Why or why not?

Appendix Q

Mindfulness for Educators Resource Bibliography

Useful websites:
Garrison Institute (CARE for Teachers; Contemplative Teaching & Learning): http://www.garrisoninstitute.org/contemplation-and-education/ce-resources

Association for Mindfulness in Education: http://www.mindfuleducation.org/resources.html

Adult learning/Curriculum-based:
Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain by Daniel Siegel (2013): http://www.drdansiegel.com/

Learning to breath: A Mindfulness Curriculum for Adolescents to Cultivate Emotion Regulation, Attention, and Performance by Patricia Broderick (2013)

A Mindful Nation: How a Simple Practice Can Help Us Reduce Stress, Improve Performance, and Recapture the American Spirit by Congressman Tim Ryan (2013): http://mindfulnation.org/

Mindfulness Starts Here: An Eight-Week Guide to Skillful Living by Lynette Monteiro and Frank Musten (2013)

Hardwiring Happiness: The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and Confidence by Rick Hanson (2013): http://www.rickhanson.net/

The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How Its Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel, and Live—and How You Can Change Them by Richard Davidson (2012): http://www.investigatinghealthyminds.org/index.html

10 Mindful Minutes, Goldie Hawn with Wendy Holden (2011)

Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children, TNH (2011)

The Whole Brain Child by Daniel Siegel (2011)

The MindUp Curriculum, The Hawn Foundation (2011)

A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook by Bob Stahl & Elisha Goldstein (2010)

The Mindful Child by Susan Kaiser Greenland (2010): http://www.susankaisergreenland.com/

Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness by Deborah Schoeberlein (2009)

Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky with Connie Burk (2009)

Appendix Q (continued)

Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, & Wisdom by Rick Hanson (2009)

Building Emotional Intelligence by Linda Lantieri (2008)

Mindful Movements: Ten Exercises for Well-Being by TNH (2008)

The Compassionate Classroom by Sura Hart and Victoria Kindle Hodson (2004)

Teaching Children to Care: Classroom Management for Ethical and Academic Growth, K-8 by Ruth Sidney Charney (2002)

The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life by Parker Palmer (1998)

Teaching Goodness: Engaging the Moral and Academic Promise of Young Children, Goodman & Balamore (1994)

The Private Eye: Looking/Thinking by Analogy, Kerry Ruef (1992)

Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990)

Children's Books for Social-Emotional Learning/Mindful Awareness:

Visiting Feelings by Lauren Rubenstein (2014)

Willow Wonders Why do I Worry? By Wynne & Kristin Beckstrom Radcliffe (2013)

The Little Bird by Germano Zullo (2012)

A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles by TNH (2012)

A Butterfly is Patient by Dianna Hutts Aston & Sylvia Long (2011)

Steps and Stones: An Anh's Anger Story by Gail Silver (2011)

Giant Steps to Change the World by Spike Lee & Tonya Lewis Lee (2011)

The Busy Life of Ernestine Buckmeister by Linda Ravin Lodding (2011)

The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life with the Chimps by Jeanette Winter (2011)

Your Fantastic Elastic Brain: Stretch It, Shape It by JoAnn Deak (2010)

What Does It Mean To Be Present? By Rana DiOrio (2010)

Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters, Barack Obama (2010)

Appendix Q (continued)

Anh's Anger by Gail Silver (2009)

PEBBLE: A Story about Belonging by Susan Milord (2007)

TWIST: yoga poems by Janet Wong (2007)

A little PEACE by Barbara Kerley (2007)

The Golden Rule by Ilene Cooper (2007)

Have You Filled a Bucket Today? by Carol McCloud (2007)

An Egg is Quiet by Dianna Aston & Sylvia Long (2006)

Paths to Peace: People Who Changed the World by Jane Breskin Zalben (2006)

The Secret of Saying Thanks by Douglas Wood (2005)

What Does Peace Feel Like? by Vladimir Radunsky (2004)

The Three Questions by Jon Muth (2002)

Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by Doreen Rappaport (2001)

Each Breath a Smile by Sister Susan (2001)

Simon's Hook: A story about teases and put-downs by Karen Gedig Burnett (2000)

How Are You Peeling?: Foods with Moods by Saxton Feymann & Joost Elffers (1999)

Something Beautiful by Sharon Dennis Wyeth (1998)

Make Someone Smile by Judy Lalli (1996)

The Lotus Seed by Sherry Garland (1993)

An Angel for Solomon Singer by Cynthia Ryland (1992)

Peace Tales: World Folktales to Talk About by Margaret Read MacDonald (1992)

The Listening Walk by Paul Showers (1991)

Our Peaceful Classroom by Aline Wolf (1991)

Peace Begins With You by Katherine Scholes (1989)

Appendix Q (continued)

Recordings/Documentaries:

A Still Quiet Place: Mindfulness for Young Children narrated by Dr. Amy Saltzman (2004): http://www.stillquietplace.com/

Room to Breathe: www.RoomToBreatheFilm.com

Free the Mind: Can You Rewire the Brain Just by Taking a Breath?, a documentary film by Phie Ambo

Healthy Habits of Mind, a free film about integrating mindfulness into education: http://www.mindfulschools.org/resources/healthy-habits-of-mind/